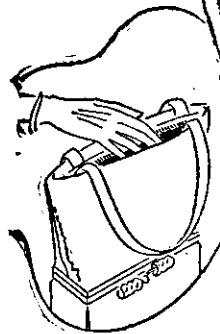


# THE NEW "Double-Decker"

Lower Deck  
Cosmetic com-  
pactum with  
built-in mirror.  
Holds complete  
beauty outfit.

Upper Deck  
Capacious  
handbag . . .  
large interior  
pocket . . .  
small  
purse . . . zip-  
fastened.



Smartest and most  
practical handbag de-  
sign from overseas is  
this dual - purpose  
model, now presented  
for the first time by  
Strand, under the  
name of "Double-  
Decker".  
In leather . . . all  
shades . . . beautifully  
finished.

And of course  
it's a

Now Showing  
at all Leading  
Stores.

# Strand

STRAND BAG COMPANY LTD. - CHRISTCHURCH - APRIL, 1948.

## Incredible Country

By "SUNDOWNER"

I KNOW that there are people who see nothing in the Upper Molyneux Valley but rocks and desolation, and nothing in the Cromwell Gorge but the place where the gold used to be. Some of us, no doubt, see too much there—history where there never was any, and romance 50 years after the breath of life has gone. Well some are always too smart to be sensible and some too dull to be alive, but he is surely only half alive who feels nothing between Cromwell and Bald Hill Flat, say, but a desire to escape into greener country.

I am not myself greatly moved by gold-rush stories now that the goldfields are so completely dead. But it is moving to see where the miners carried water and to think what that water is doing to-day. Eighty-seven years have passed since the rush to the Dunstan and the Arrow, but 187 years will not obliterate the old water-races or the good and evil that they wrought. But when time does remove the marks man has made in this country so far it will be the evil that will disappear first. Twenty years ago I would have put it the other way round; but after seeing apricots and peaches, and the biggest walnut tree I have ever met in my life, growing above tailings in Conroy's Gully, and pine trees planting themselves in bare shingle near Roxburgh, I can't doubt that it will be harder in 500 years to think what water has carried away than to see what it has brought.

Meanwhile, the two pictures stand side by side—incredible desolation where there was once fertility and growth, incredible fertility where everything, only a few years ago, was desolation. I have mentioned the orchard in Conroy's Gully with its walnut tree covering more than 600 square yards. That tree is growing on a bank, and the bank for some reason or other—private ownership perhaps and the presence of the tree—was left standing when the miners worked the rest of the gully. But the rest of the orchard is in the bed of the gully, and I can remember when much of what is now cherries, apricots, and pears was tailings, with Chinese at work a little higher up patiently turning the soil they had washed or carried down from the hill-sides and once at least lost in a cloud-burst.

MANY stories have been told about the first fruit tree grown in Central Otago and many claims made to the first box of fruit sent away. I am old

enough to mistrust the first of anything, including the first man, but am prepared to believe that commercial fruit-growing did have a formal beginning.

### GOLD TO FRUIT

Somebody somewhere did send off a case of fruit, and then a few cases, and then a load. But the first fruit-grower was not a commercial man. He was a home-sick man, perhaps a farmer, perhaps a labourer, but hardly, I think, a



"Incredible desolation where there was once fertility and growth, incredible fertility where everything, only a few years ago, was desolation"

miner. He wanted what he had lost, the apple or pear or plum or peach tree he had left on the other side of the world, and he somehow or other got a chance to put one in. There would, of course, be many home-sick men, and many experimental plantings, and it is profitless to try to find the first; but all would precede the commercial grower.

If we allow the commercial grower 70 years we shall, I think, have done him more than justice. Not many orchards, if any, are as old as that, and not very many 60 years old. The best are probably about 40 years old, but there certainly are some half as old again.

What Otago owes its fruit-growers is not so much the development of undeveloped land as the better development of land already used in other ways. They had the wisdom to see the possibilities and the patience and hardihood to wait five, six, seven, or eight years for their first harvest. I don't know how some of them came through those years, as I don't know how some of the miners lived while they were carrying water eight or ten and sometimes twice ten miles to the spot at which they decided the gold could be found. I suppose they hired themselves out while the trees were growing, helped to make roads and bridges and railways

(continued on next page)

**automatic**  
POWERED BY YOUR  
DAILY ACTIONS  
non-magnetic,  
protected, dustproof.

**165 FIRST PRIZES**

# MOVADO

the last word in watchmaking

Sold and serviced by jewellers throughout New Zealand.